

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3304

November 24, 2025

Brigadier General Maurice O. Barnett
Commanding General
United States Army Cadet Command and Fort Knox
204 1st Cavalry Regiment Road, Bldg 1002
Fort Knox, Kentucky 40121

Dear Brigadier General Barnett,

I am writing to express concern regarding the planned reclassification of the Bull City Battalion currently hosted by Duke University—as an extension unit under the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. We recognize that the Army Transformation Initiative and associated civilian workforce reductions have led to difficult choices. However, in this instance, the proposed reclassification may unintentionally undercut the very readiness and efficiency outcomes this initiative seeks to strengthen.

The proposed shift removes Duke's Professor of Military Science and key civilian support positions, transferring oversight to UNC Chapel Hill. This change will dilute program cohesion, reduce recruiting capacity in the region, and complicate coordination between Duke and North Carolina Central University (NCCU)—two institutions whose success has depended on close collaboration and proximity.

For NCCU cadets, the new structure doubles travel time and distance to the host institution, creating clear logistical and financial burdens. Many cadets come from modest backgrounds and rely on accessible instruction and campus-based support. The loss of local administrative and instructional presence risks diminished participation, higher attrition, and a smaller pool of future officers from one of the Army's most effective and diverse commissioning pipelines.

Maintaining this host-unit structure preserves a pipeline of high-performing, diverse cadets, which has been shown to contribute to mission success, critical thinking, and readiness—goals the Army itself prioritizes.

The Duke–NCCU partnership represents more than administrative efficiency; it is a proven model of collaboration that reflects the Army's core values of excellence, inclusion, and community partnership. Duke's deep engagement with defense research and national security initiatives complements NCCU's historic role as an HBCU cultivating officer talent that mirrors the nation's strength and diversity.

Reassigning the host designation away from this established ecosystem would weaken one of the Army's highest-performing ROTC units. It risks sending a discouraging signal to institutions that have long invested in the success of Army ROTC and could reduce the overall quality and diversity of the Army's officer corps.

While intended to optimize resources, reclassification may produce the opposite effect. Consolidating host duties at UNC–Chapel Hill could create hidden costs—greater travel reimbursements, reduced recruiting efficiency, and lost return on investment from a high-performing, self-sustaining program. The Bull City Battalion consistently produces top-ranking cadets nationally, demonstrating that the current configuration yields exceptional results at minimal overhead. Undermining that structure could ultimately require additional resources to regain lost ground in future years.

We respectfully urge Cadet Command to reconsider the reclassification decision, or at minimum, to conduct a comprehensive impact review that evaluates outcomes in officer production, diversity, recruiting sustainability, and total cost efficiency. Maintaining Duke University as the host institution will preserve program quality, strengthen a vital regional partnership, and ensure the Army continues to commission officers who embody operational excellence and reflect the nation they serve.

We appreciate your leadership and continued commitment to developing the next generation of Army leaders, and we stand ready to assist in identifying a solution that sustains both readiness and opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Valerie P. Foushee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress